

Message Text

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TO USINT HAVANA NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 061753

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: CASC, CPAS, CGEN, ASEC, PINS, CU, CA

SUBJECT: AMERICAN FUGITIVES IN CUBA

REF HAVANA 635

1. WE HAVE EXPLORED POSSIBILITY OF TRANSPORTING FUGITIVES
BACK TO THE U.S. VIA CUBANA FLIGHT 480 ON MARCH 10. WE
FIND THAT IT PRESENTS A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS, PRINCIPALLY HOW
TO TRANSFER FUGITIVES FROM MONTREAL TO POINT IN U.S.
WITHOUT THEIR TECHNICALLY ENTERING CANADIAN TERRITORY.
CANADIAN AUTHORITIES WISH TO KEEP THEIR ROLE IN TRANSFER
OF FUGITIVES TO A MINIMUM AND THEY HAVE ALREADY REJECTED
OUR SUGGESTION THAT FUGITIVES BE TRANSPORTED TO U.S. VIA
LAND FROM MONTREAL. WE DOUBT THAT THEY WOULD BE EAGER
TO HAVE FUGITIVES TRANSFER TO ANOTHER PLANE IN MONTREAL
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AND CHARTER OF CUBANA AIRCRAFT FOR THIS LEG OF JOURNEY
IS OUT OF QUESTION.

2. WE SUGGEST THAT YOU ADVISE CUBAN AUTHORITIES THAT
WE ARE UNABLE TO UTILIZE CUBANA FLIGHT ON MARCH 10
BECAUSE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS CANNOT BE MADE IN TIME

AND THAT WE ARE EXPLORING OTHER POSSIBILITIES.

3. DEPARTMENT WILL TAKE LINE WITH PRESS ALONG LINES YOU SUGGEST IN PARA. 4 OF REFTTEL, STRESSING THAT FUGITIVES ARE LEAVING CUBA VOLUNTARILY AND THAT GOC ONLY AUTHORIZED THEIR DEPARTURE. WE HAVE REPORT THAT AIR CANADA SPOKESMAN TOLD ABC AFFILIATE IN MONTREAL THAT IT WAS THEIR DECISION NOT TO ALLOW FUGITIVES TO BOARD AIRCRAFT. EMBASSY OTTAWA WISHES, NEVERTHELESS, TO DOWNPLAY OFFICIAL CANADIAN ROLE IN TRANSFER.

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

4. FOLLOWING IS PRESS GUIDANCE PREPARED IN DEPARTMENT WHICH YOU MAY USE:

Q: HOW WERE ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR THE FUGITIVES TO BE REPATRIATED?

A: THE PERSONS IN QUESTION REQUESTED THAT THEY BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES. THE CUBAN AUTHORITIES CONCURRED IN THEIR DEPARTURE FROM CUBA WITH THE PROPER DOCUMENTATION. THIS DOCUMENTATION WAS PROVIDED BY THE U.S. INTERESTS SECTION IN HAVANA.

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Q: HOW MANY FUGITIVES WERE INVOLVED?

A: SIX.

Q: WHEN WERE THEY SUPPOSED TO LEAVE AND WHY DIDN'T THEY?

A: IT WAS EXPECTED THAT THEY WOULD DEPART HAVANA ON AN AIR CANADA FLIGHT ON MARCH 9 EN ROUTE TO NEW YORK. THE PLANE WAS SCHEDULED TO STOP IN MONTREAL.

Q: WHY DIDN'T THE FUGITIVES BOARD THE PLANE?

A: IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT AIR CANADA MADE THE DECISION FOR THEM NOT TO BOARD THE PLANE.

Q: WHY DID AIR CANADA REFUSE THE EMBARCATION?

A: ASK AIR CANADA.

Q: WHEN WILL THE FUGITIVES RETURN TO THE U.S.?

A: WE ARE EXPLORING OTHER POSSIBILITIES TO TRANSPORT THEM TO THE U.S. AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. WE HAVE NO

FURTHER DETAILS FOR YOU AT THIS TIME.

Q: WERE THESE ARRANGEMENTS MADE THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS
BETWEEN THE AMERICAN AND CUBAN GOVERNMENTS?

A: CUBAN AUTHORITIES CONCURRED IN THE REQUEST OF THE
FUGITIVES TO DEPART CUBA.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SIX FUGITIVES WHEN THEY RETURN TO
THE U.S.?

A: THEY WILL BE SUBJECT TO U.S. LAW.

Q: WHY ARE THEY LEAVING CUBA FOR THE U.S.?
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A: ASK THE FUGITIVES. VANCE

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